ADVISORY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE | MAY 13, 2024

Welcome!

Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation

VICTORIA SAANICH CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

victoriasaanich.ca

Peter MacLeod

Chair, Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation

Principal, MASS LBP

Richard Johnson

Lead Facilitator, Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation

Senior Associate, MASS LBP

AGENDA

Welcome & Introductions
About the Citizens' Assembly
Project updates & timelines

Roles of the Advisory & Oversight Committee
Program development
Member recourse
Service pledge

Next Steps
Communications
Next meeting: Monday, Aug 12, 2024, 6-7pm PT

What is a Citizens' Assembly?

A Citizens' Assembly is a type of long-form deliberative process where a demographically representative group of randomly selected volunteers study an issue in order to make one or more consensus recommendations to government on behalf of a wider community.

What is a Citizens' Assembly?

Citizens' Assembly sometimes go by different names: Citizens' Conventions, Citizens' Juries, or Reference Panels.

Citizens' Assemblies began in British Columbia twenty years ago!

Today there have been almost 1,000 assemblies that have taken place around the world. This movement is called the 'deliberative wave' and has been studied by the OECD. Some of the most famous: Ireland, France, U.K. Since 2004, there have been more than 50 Citizens' Assemblies and Reference Panels in Canada. This will be the fifth in British Columbia.

50 Assemblies and Reference Panels

National pharmacare,
CIHR

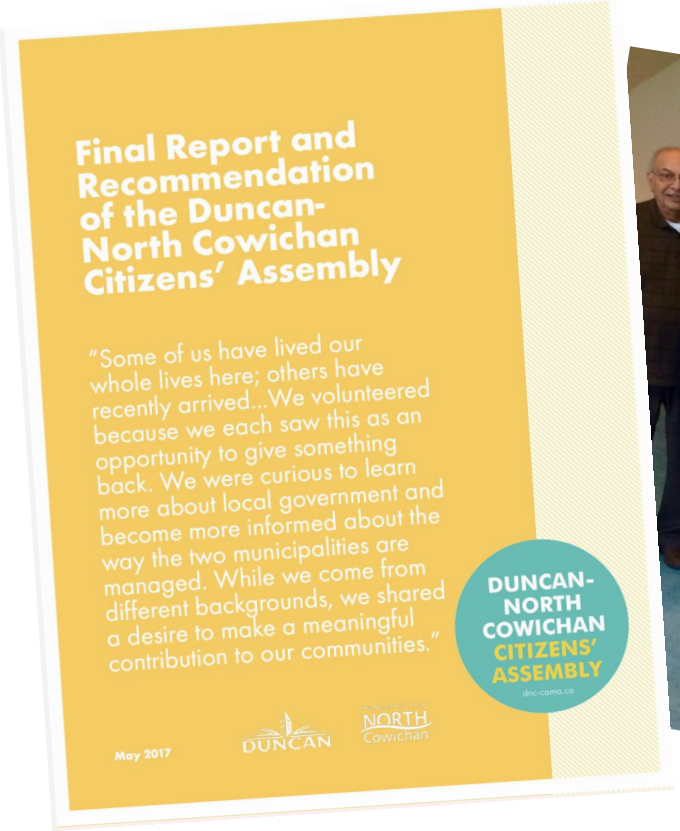
Planning priorities,
City of Toronto

Noise management,
Toronto Pearson

Condominium legislation,
Government of Ontario

Digital Identity and Privacy
Regional transportation priorities
Housing legislation
Income polarization
Supervised Injection Services
Hospital Services and Budgeting
Municipal Amalgamation
Long-term land use planning
Primary care reform

Compensation for municipal councillors
Heavy infrastructure
Airport Noise
Municipal Revenues
Pharmaceutical insurance
Mental Health
Municipal Planning Policies
Cancer Care
Public Housing



Final Report and Recommendation of the Duncan-North Cowichan Citizens' Assembly

"Some of us have lived our whole lives here; others have recently arrived...We volunteered because we each saw this as an opportunity to give something back. We were curious to learn more about local government and become more informed about the way the two municipalities are managed. While we come from different backgrounds, we shared a desire to make a meaningful contribution to our communities."

DUNCAN-NORTH COWICHAN CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

dnc-cama.ca

May 2017

DUNCAN

NORTH Cowichan

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This Assembly's mandate and origins

COMMUNITY OPINION QUESTION: "Are you in favour of spending up to $250,000 for establishing a Citizens' Assembly to explore the costs, benefits and disadvantages of the amalgamation between the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria?" Y/N	
	Number of Valid Votes
YES	16,852
No	13,274

The Assembly's mandate flows from a community question asked during the 2018 municipal election. Following the affirmative result in both Victoria and Saanich, councillors from both municipalities developed a terms of reference to guide this process.

This Assembly's mandate and origins

The Assembly is mandated by the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria to explore the costs, benefits and disadvantages of the amalgamation between the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria.

Specifically, the Assembly will:

a. Identify common aspirations for good local governance to provide a basis for evaluating costs, benefits and disadvantages of amalgamation and status quo of the municipalities relative to their current independent status.

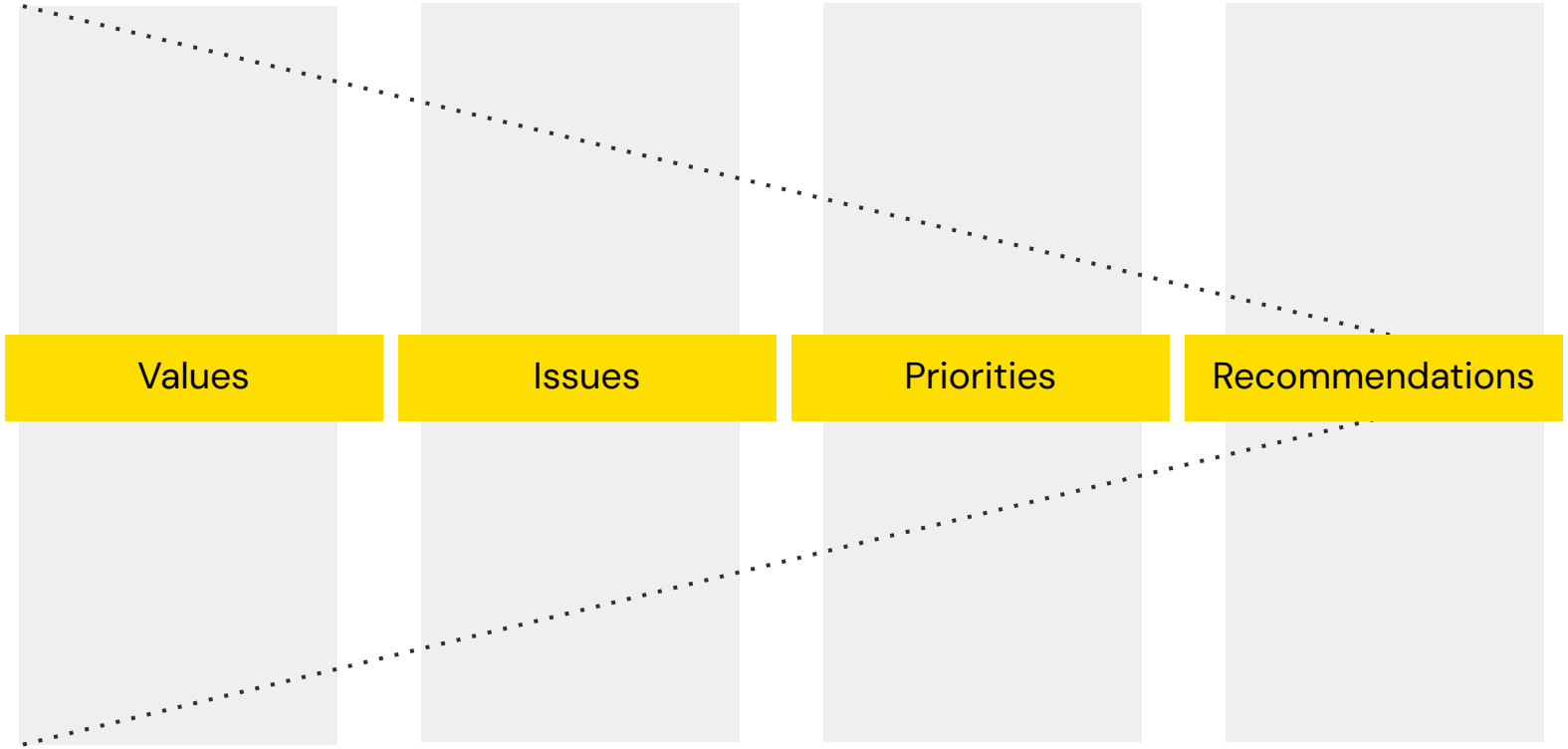
b. List the issues which the Assembly believes needs to be resolved for amalgamation to merit consideration, including issues related to the implementation and integration of the municipalities under amalgamation.

After weighing the evidence and considering what it believes are the best interests of both municipalities, the Assembly will strive to achieve a consensus recommendation on whether and under what conditions the municipalities should amalgamate. The recommendations could also include suggestions for service integration.

The Assembly's Nine Principles

- Openness and Transparency
- Accountability and Legitimacy
- Effective Representation
- Accessibility
- Independence
- Well-Informed
- Balance
- Collaborative Decision-Making
- Respect

Inside the Assembly: VIPR



Three-track curriculum design

Subject knowledge
Process knowledge
Personal and group skills

Project Updates and Timelines

VICTORIA SAANICH CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

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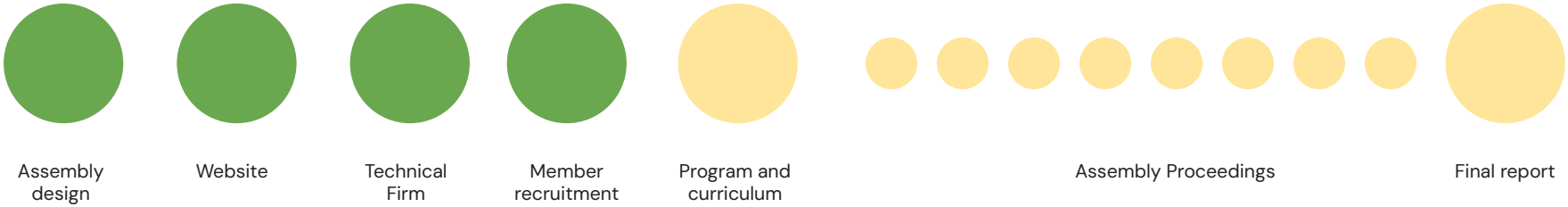
When will the Assembly take place?

September 21, 2024	November 2, 2024	January 11, 2025	March 8, 2025
October 19, 2024	November 30, 2024	February 8, 2025	April 5, 2025

Four public roundtable meetings will also be scheduled, where residents can meet and converse with members of the assembly.

December 2024:	Interim Report
January 2025:	Technical Study Report
June 2025:	Final Report delivered to Councils

Timelines


Assembly design
Website
Technical Firm
Member recruitment
Program and curriculum
Assembly Proceedings
Final report

CITY OF VICTORIA

Saanich

VICTORIA SAANICH CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

CANADA POST POSTES CANADA

Postage paid Port payé

Personalized Mail Courrier personnalisé

0000000

Help determine whether Victoria and Saanich should amalgamate

1-in-12 households received this special invitation, please volunteer to serve your community

Resident of
101-123 Anywhere Street
Anytown BC V1M 1M1

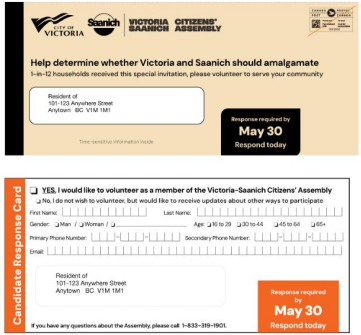
Time-sensitive information inside

Response required by

May 30

Respond today

What’s inside?



CITY OF VICTORIA | Saanich | VICTORIA SAANICH CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

Help determine whether Victoria and Saanich should amalgamate

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Resident of
101-123 Anywhere Street
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Time-sensitive information inside

Response required by
May 30
Respond today

Candidate Response Card

❑ **YES, I would like to volunteer as a member of the Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly**

❑ No, I do not wish to volunteer, but would like to receive updates about other ways to participate

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Gender: ❑ Man / ❑ Woman / ❑ _____ Age: ❑ 16 to 29 ❑ 30 to 44 ❑ 45 to 64 ❑ 65+

Primary Phone Number: ___-___-___ Secondary Phone Number: ___-___-___

Email: _____

Resident of
101-123 Anywhere Street
Anytown BC V1M 1M1

Response required by
May 30
Respond today

If you have any questions about the Assembly, please call 1-833-319-1901.

CITY OF VICTORIA | Saanich | VICTORIA SAANICH CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

April 12, 2024

Dear Resident,

This letter is a special invitation to volunteer to serve on the Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation. The Assembly will explore the costs, benefits and disadvantages of amalgamation between the two municipalities.

As they grow, municipalities sometimes consider whether they should merge with neighbouring jurisdictions. This process, called amalgamation, means combining the governments, geographic boundaries, municipal services and identities of two or more jurisdictions.

Over the years, the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich have considered whether they should amalgamate and become one municipality. During the 2018 General and Local School Board Elections, both municipalities asked a "Community Opinion Question" to gauge public support for establishing and funding a Citizens' Assembly to study the issue and reach a consensus on a recommendation. A majority of voters in both municipalities approved the measure and now, after being delayed by the pandemic, the Citizens' Assembly is moving forward.

The Citizens' Assembly is an independent process commissioned by the elected councils of both municipalities. Forty-eight randomly selected residents will serve on the Assembly, meeting over eight full-day sessions and two evening public meetings between September 2024 and April 2025.

This letter is an invitation to anyone in your household age 16 or older to volunteer as a candidate for the Citizens' Assembly.

With the assistance of independent experts from within and outside the region, the Assembly will learn about the municipalities and the issues around amalgamation, and deliberate together on whether and under what conditions amalgamation or further service integration should take place. The Assembly members will draft a report with their recommendations, which will be delivered to the elected councils of Victoria and Saanich in the summer of 2025.

The Assembly is one stage in a process. Before amalgamation could proceed, it would need to be endorsed by both councils and approved by a majority of voters in both municipalities during a referendum. The plan would then require the approval of the Government of British Columbia.

You do not need to be an expert to participate. It's your perspective as a local resident that matters most. From all the residents of Victoria and Saanich who respond to this invitation and volunteer, forty-eight people will be randomly selected in a way that ensures broad representation from across both communities.

If you have any questions about how you can participate as a member of the Assembly, please call the Assembly hotline at 1-833-319-1901.

Please turn over

Response required by
May 30
Respond today

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Citizens' Assembly?
A Citizens' Assembly is a representative body of citizens tasked by a government to study, deliberate, and develop recommendations on a specific issue. Typically, members of a Citizens' Assembly are randomly selected from a pool of volunteers who pledge to work on behalf of all community members over several weeks or months. The Assembly's recommendations are generally developed by consensus and are intended to represent the community's best interests.

Why have a Citizens' Assembly?
The Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation is a deliberative process intended to provide local residents with an opportunity to actively participate in developing and evaluating the case for amalgamating the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich. The Citizens' Assembly will be an impartial advisory body that provides detailed recommendations representing a broad consensus concerning the proposed amalgamation. The Assembly will work to represent all residents and exemplify high standards of transparency, accountability, and robust civic participation.

The decision to amalgamate has far-reaching consequences, and both councils believe they will benefit from the perspective of area residents participating in an informed and in-length process.

What is the mandate of the Citizens' Assembly?
The Assembly will explore the costs, benefits and disadvantages of amalgamation between the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich. They will detail their work and guidance in an interim and a final report which will be presented to the councils of the two municipalities. The final report will include the Assembly's recommendation(s) and could include suggestions related to service integrations.

The Assembly is one stage in a process. Before amalgamation could proceed, it must be endorsed by both councils and approved by a majority of voters in both municipalities during a referendum. The plan would then require the approval of the Government of British Columbia.

What would be my role as a Citizens' Assembly member?
Over eight (8) Saturdays beginning in September 2024 and ending in April 2025, Citizens' Assembly members will learn and work together to develop interim and final public reports that will provide guidance to both councils concerning the prospect of amalgamating the City of Victoria and District of Saanich.

To assist the members of the Assembly with their work, a thorough program will provide each member with the opportunity:

- to learn about the municipalities' respective infrastructure, services, operations, and governance;
- to inform and review the Amalgamation Study being undertaken concurrently with the Citizens' Assembly;
- to learn from past municipal amalgamations; and,
- to consult with and learn from independent experts as well as fellow residents.

Assembly members will be asked to attend two (2) public meetings in the home municipalities to learn from and consult residents. These meetings will take place in the fall of 2024 and winter of 2025 — final dates and locations will be announced and promoted within each community.

How do I become a member of the Citizens' Assembly?
First, you must respond to this invitation using the unique keycode by Thursday, May 30, 2024.

- Call the toll-free hotline 1-833-319-1901;
- Register securely online at victoriasaanich.ca or,
- Complete the enclosed candidate response card and mail it back in the prepaid envelope.

If you are selected for the Assembly via the Civic Lottery (see below), you will receive an email on Tuesday, June 4, 2024. An Assembly team member will then telephone you to confirm registration details, answer any questions you may have, and prepare you to serve on the Assembly. If you are unable to participate, please encourage another member of your household 16 years of age or older to volunteer.

How will members of the Citizens' Assembly be chosen?
On June 3, the 48 members of the Citizens' Assembly will be selected by a special random draw, called a Civic Lottery, from the pool of registered candidates. Twenty-seven (27) participants will be randomly selected from the District of Saanich, and twenty-one (21) will be selected from the City of Victoria. The Civic Lottery process also ensures that the Assembly is representative of other criteria, such as age, gender, housing status, and self-identified ethnicity. The result will be 48 Assembly members that broadly represent the residents of Victoria and Saanich.

Why are the members of the Assembly randomly selected?
Today, similar selection processes are routinely used in Canada and abroad to ensure that the membership of an Assembly broadly reflects the demography and diversity of thought and experience within any given community or population.

Who is eligible to serve on the Citizens' Assembly?
You are eligible to volunteer for and serve on the Assembly if you:

- are a resident of the address where the invitation was mailed;
- can provide the unique keycode printed on your candidate response card;
- are a resident of Victoria or Saanich and have been for at least six months;
- are 16 years of age or older as of May 30, 2024; and,
- can attend and participate in all eight (8) Assembly sessions.

You do not need to be a Canadian citizen to volunteer. Special provisions will be made for unhoused or underhoused residents who wish to participate. For more information, please contact the toll-free hotline at 1-833-319-1901.

Each letter has a unique code which allows the recipient to register their name as a potential volunteer, by phone, website, or mail. Any member of the household age 16+ can volunteer.

The deadline to respond is May 30th.

VICTORIA SAANICH CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

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How members will be recruited and selected

On June 3rd, the 48 members of the Citizens' Assembly will be randomly selected from the pool of registered volunteers using a type of blind draw called a Civic Lottery. Those lucky lottery winners will receive phone calls.

The Civic Lottery is stratified to ensure that the Citizens' Assembly broadly matches the demography of Victoria and Saanich. Given the differences in population, 27 seats on the Assembly will be reserved for Saanich residents and 21 seats will be reserved for Victoria residents. The Civic Lottery will also weigh factors like gender, age, local geography and housing status, as well as ensuring broad diversity and the participation of Indigenous residents.

MNP Technical Report Draft outline

Background and Purpose
Local Government in BC Overview
Goals/Aims & Documented Issues
Study Method and Report

Geography
Boundary Map
Population

Financial Overview
Property Taxation
Revenues and Expenditures
Capital Assets and Projects
Debts
Other Considerations (if present)

Municipal Administration and Services
General Government
Planning and Development Services
Protective and Emergency Services
Environmental Health
Parks and Recreation Services
Social Support Services
Other Considerations (if present)

Financial Impacts
Potential Annual Impacts to an Amalgamated Municipality
Potential One-Time Implementation Expenses
Overview of Adjusted General Municipal Tax Rates
Potential Property Tax Impacts on Representative Properties
Other Considerations (if present)

Regional District Impacts (CRD)
Representation
Services Differences (if any)
Other Considerations (if present)

Key considerations noted during study
Naming
Community
Governance
Transition Process
Community Vision, Planning, and Development
Social and Environmental Issues
Disadvantages and Advantages
Other Considerations (if present)

Advisory and Oversight Committee

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The Advisory and Oversight Committee

We will be appointing an Advisory and Oversight Committee to provide advice to to the Assembly Chair concerning the process the Assembly will follow and its curriculum. It will also respond to any concerns from Assembly members related to the conduct and impartiality of the Assembly itself. The Advisory and Oversight Group will be composed of six members. Two of these members will reside in Saanich, two will reside in Victoria, and two will reside outside of these municipalities.

We expect to announce the members of the committee later this month.

The Advisory and Oversight Committee

Terms of Reference

Member recourse

Service pledge

Program development

Next Steps and Questions

Next Steps
Program development suggestions
Communications

Next meeting: Monday, Aug 12, 2024, 6-7pm PT

Thank you!

VICTORIA SAANICH CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

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